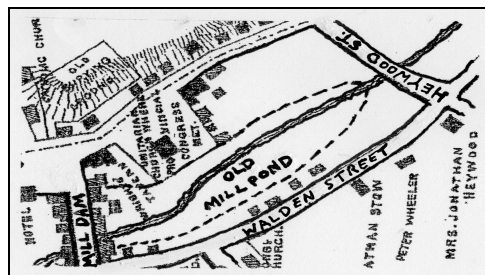


Welcome to a **Historic Tour of the Mill Brook**. This interpretive guide will take you along historic points and scenic vistas within the 2,100-acre watershed of the Lower Mill Brook. The **Mill Brook** is 3 miles, rising in Lincoln, flowing through the center of Concord, and emptying into the Concord River. Three walking loops are available. You can begin with the Concord center loop, a mile, and those with lots of energy can continue on the extended tours. Please use the map for guidance.

A. Concord Center

- 1) In 1635, English settlers established a village along lower Mill Brook. Concord was founded when Simon Willard, standing at a fishing weir on the Mill Brook, traded clothes and tools with the native people in exchange for 6 square miles of land in the village that native Indians called Musketaquid. See sign at Jethro's tree for details.
- 2) In the 17th century, a 18-cell granite **jail** was located at the corner of Lowell St. and Main St. See stone monument.
- 3) In 1742, a road was built across the **Mill Dam** where Main Street exists today. See sign, referenced on map.
- 4) In 1636, the earliest Concord mill was built on Mill Dam to grind grain. This created **Mill Pond** which was shaped like an eel, five times longer than it was broad. While facing the house at One Main St. look right to see sign, pictured below.



Map by Hiram W. Blaisdell

B. First Parish Bridge

- 5) In 1673, a meetinghouse was built where the First Parish church exists today. This was the site of the First and Second Provincial Congress of 1774. Slaughterhouses, tan yards, and blacksmiths were also built around Mill Pond.
- 6) Mill Pond was drained in 1828 by the Mill Dam Company in which Capt. Abel Moore was a principal member. Prisoners from the Concord jail where Capt. Moore was a jailer for 28 years performed the labor. Draining the pond also aided Capt. Moore to alter a large area of wetlands to produce hayfields and cultivation.

C. Heywood St. Bridge

- 7) Native American **camp**s of Paleo-Indians, Early Archaic and Woodland Period settlers, and Algonquians hunted by the brook creating fishing weirs and trails. One longer-term base camp, possibly for residence, was located upstream from Heywood Meadow in late Archaic time.
- 8) One of the earliest **fords** during Concord settlement was located where Heywood St. bridge exists today. Here, the brook was straightened both upstream and downstream.
- 9) Large stone slabs were once used over the Mill Brook for crossings. One is in the field east of Heywood Street.
- 10) The Heywood Meadow area was once Luke Potter's lot, one of the long, narrow parallel lots extending from the brook northward up over the ridge to common grazing land.
- 11) While following the trail (see map) there is a bench that was made in 2001 from a construction beam that Terry Baker, a long time Mill Brook steward, pulled out of the Mill Brook.

D. Emerson House

- 12) The world famous authors, **Ralph Waldo Emerson**, **Louisa May Alcott**, **Nathaniel Hawthorne**, and at times, **Henry David Thoreau** lived next to the Mill Brook and drew inspiration from it.
- 13) **Bronson Alcott** planted willows and built a bathing place by the Mill Brook for his daughters.
- 14) Emerson used to walk over Mill brook on a bridge behind the Emerson House.



Heywood Meadow

E. Cambridge Turnpike Crossing

- 15) In the 1730s water was diverted in ditches either from the Elm Brook to the Mill Brook or vice versa.
- 16) The wetland south of the Cambridge Turnpike crossing was named **Clintonia Swamp** by Henry Thoreau after the plant *Clintonia borealis*, also called blue beadlelily.
- 17) Throughout history beavers have built dams along the brook in this area and today they still create flooding on properties.
- 18) Concord's ordinary summer water level has been approximately 110 feet above sea level. Flood levels greater than 120 feet have occurred in 1886, 1992, 1936, and 1968.
- 19) During a 1996 flood, water rose 6.7 inches over Cambridge Turnpike.

F. Hawthorne Lane Crossing

- 20) In 1655, fords were created across the brook at Heywood St. and Hawthorne Lane. Early fords were replaced by wooden bridges, which often washed away and required replacement.
- 21) **Ephraim Bull** developed the **Concord Grape** in his garden by the Mill Brook. See the stone tablet and grape arbor at 91 Lexington Road.

G. Lowell Road Crossing/Mill Brook Way

- 22) In the mid 17th century, a road began along the present Lowell Road, with a ford across Mill Brook at the existing Lowell Road crossing. The ford was probably replaced with a wooden bridge and eventually by a stone bridge. When Hunt's bridge was built over the Concord River, Lowell Road became a major route connecting Concord with Groton, Chelmsford, Carlisle, and New Hampshire.
- 23) In 1979, the shopping center at the corner of Keyes Road, Mill Brook Tarry, was constructed.
- 24) In 1871-1872, the **Middlesex Central Railroad** was built from Boston and Bedford and reached Concord. In 1920, the railroad was closed and the depot became a local lumberyard. Mill Brook flows within a 170 ft. stone culvert underneath Concord Lumber and **Mill Brook Way**, at trail along the old railroad bed.



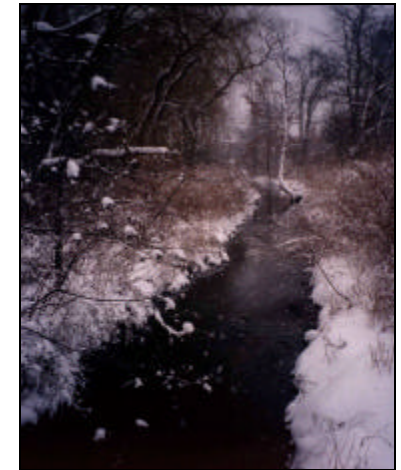
H. Chamberlin Bridge

- 25) This wooden footbridge was built in 1974 after **Chamberlin Park** was established in 1971. For two centuries until the end of the 19th century Mill Brook was greatly altered due to increased farming and deforestation. The brook became very polluted as sediment, livestock manure, human wastes, local industrial wastes entered the brook. In 1895, the town "warned people by posting notices forbidding the throwing of anything into the brook".
- 26) By mid 19th century, barely 10% of Concord was wooded. Eventually, coal and then oil replaced wood as an energy source, and trees regrew.
- 27) In 1899, a sewer system was established which greatly improved streamwater quality; but in 1965, construction of storm drains began which drain into the Mill Brook.
- 28) Mill Brook is currently impacted from stormwater which carries sediment, salt, and nonpoint source pollution (ie. gas) from roads and other impervious surfaces into the brook.
- 29) The **Mill Brook Task Force** was created in 1995 to protect and restore Mill Brook. Due to the dedicated effort of this volunteer group there is more awareness and appreciation of the Brook's historical, ecological, and cultural significance. For more information visit the Task Force's web site at www.concordnet.org/dplm/millbrook.html.

* Much of this information was taken from *Concord's Mill Brook, Flowing Through Time*, available for sale for \$5 at the Division of Natural Resources office.

Mill Brook Historic Tour

*Glimpsing Concord's history through
the eyes of the Mill Brook*



Mill Brook Task Force Division of Natural Resources

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